

REGULAR MEETING-MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
January 14, 2008

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Blair, Clouette, Duffy, Haddad, Koehn, Nesbitt, Paterson, Paulhus, Schaefer

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Clouette seconded to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2007 Special Meeting as presented. The motion passed with Mr. Nesbitt and Mr. Schaefer abstaining.

Mr. Nesbitt questioned the wording of Item 5 of the December 10, 2007 minutes. He requested that the answer to his question be added to the minutes. The Clerk will review the meeting tape and make the necessary changes. Council members discussed the level of detail appropriate for the minutes. Some members would like more details, some members expressed a preference for less detail and some members feel the current practice has served the Town well. By consensus the Council agreed to further discuss the issue as the rules and procedures for Town Council meetings are developed. Mr. Clouette moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to table the minutes to the next meeting. Motion passed.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Paterson requested a moment of silence in honor of and respect for our troops around the world.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Michael Siskoski, 135 Wildwood Road, inquired as to why the agenda for tonight's meeting did not appear on the Town's website until noon today? He expressed disappointment that the petition to repeal the amendment to the Housing Code was not presented to the Council noting that if the Council had full confidence in the ordinance they would allow the voters a vote. Mr. Siskoski spoke in favor of Mr. Nesbitt's proposal for an ordinance on communication.

Betty Wassmundt, 54 Old Turnpike Road, expressed her disappointment in the process and the outcome of the petition effort and offered to provide copies of the petition to Council members. She questioned whether the ordinance procedure as described in the Town Charter was adhered to in the introduction of this ordinance and whether the ordinance noticed was the same ordinance voted on. She requested the Council appoint 2 Council members to discuss her concerns with the Housing Ordinance with her and report back. Ms. Wassmundt requested an answer to the question of why all the pool use at the Community Center has been allocated as community use and requested a copy of the Community Center's consultant's letter of employment. She urged Town Council members not to limit public debate and expressed support for the No Freeze Shelter's request for additional funds.

David Freudmann, 22 Eastwood Road, urged caution in granting fee waivers, subsidizing rent or offering tax considerations to the Downtown Partnership, as it would set a precedent

for other developers. He stated that the project should rise or fall on its own merits. Mr. Freudman also expressed preference for a parking lot instead of a parking garage.

Mayor Paterson clarified that the suggested considerations are only for the 1A Building and that both business owners and their customers have requested them.

IV. SWEARING IN OF DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

1. Swearing in of Deputy Fire Marshal

The Town Clerk swore in Karin Lipinski as Deputy Fire Marshal. Chief David Dagon thanked Ms. Lipinski for her commitment noting the position required 255 hours of work on her own time.

Ms. Blair left the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

Mr. Schaefer moved to add a discussion of a financial retreat to the agenda under Old Business as item 9a. Seconded by Mr. Paulhus the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Koehn moved to add the petition for the repeal of the amendment to the Housing Code to the agenda under Old Business as item 9b. Mr. Nesbitt seconded the motion. Ms. Koehn would like the communications between the Town Clerk and the Town Attorney to be a matter of public record. Mr. Clouette commented that since the petition was not presented to the Town Council it would not be appropriate to add it as an agenda item. In favor of the motion were Koehn, Nesbitt and Duffy opposed were Clouette, Haddad, Paterson, Paulhus and Schaefer. The motion failed.

Ms. Koehn moved to add copies of the emails from the Town Attorney and Town Clerk to Council members regarding the petition for the repeal of the amendment to the Housing Code as a communication item. Mr. Schaefer called the question, seconded by Mr. Clouette, the motion passed. The motion to add the items as a communication item passed with Mr. Haddad opposed.

Mr. Haddad moved to move Item 7, Employee Health Insurance, Broker's Report, as the next item of business. Seconded by Mr. Schaefer the motion passed.

V. OLD BUSINESS

2. An Ordinance Providing a Tax Exemption for Farm Buildings

Mr. Schaefer moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded, effective January 14, 2008, to schedule a public hearing for 7:30 PM at the Town Council's regular meeting on January 28, 2008, to solicit public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance Providing Tax Exemption for Farm Building.

Ms. Koehn asked staff how they plan to address an offset to the cost of this program. Mr. Clouette requested a copy of the referenced statute.

Motion passed
unanimously.

3. Community/Campus Relations

Town Manager Matt Hart reviewed his update on Community-Campus Relations. Ms. Koehn asked the Town Manager to provide her with a copy of the Office of Off Campus Housing 's memo that summarized what other campuses are doing.

4. Community Water and Wastewater Issues

Town Manager Matt Hart reported the Committee is still looking for a user representative, but at the last meeting they did welcome new member, Dan Mullins. Tom Callahan updated the Committee on UConn's response to the most recent drought and new system connections were discussed. The Town Manager will provide minutes to the Council when they are available. Ms. Koehn requested that the assumptions regarding the projected savings from the conservation of water on campus noted in the Master Plan be examined. Mr. Schaeffer reiterated the need to look for external sources of water now.

5. Parks and Recreation Financial Statements

Council members continued their discussion on the cost and revenue allocations between community use and member use in the Parks and Recreation budget.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

6. Transportation Services for Seniors

Kevin Grunwald, Director of Social Services, summarized transportation options available to the elderly and disabled. He will check to see if the determining radius for use of the ADA Dial-A-Ride as a paratransit is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile or 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Mr. Clouette suggested that the International Transportation Network, which staff is researching, be looked at on a community-wide basis.

Mr. Schaefer left the meeting at 9:40 P.M.

7. Employee Health Insurance, Broker's Report

Steve May, the town's employee benefits broker and consultant, discussed the current employee health insurance situation in Mansfield and briefly compared the Town's programs with others in the state. He reviewed some of the pressures on the healthcare system and some of the potential options in the market place. He noted that while Mansfield's premiums are lower than some other towns our increases have recently been steeper, correcting them to the market. In response to a question, Mr. May commented that since Mansfield's program is self-funding it is important to review it annually and budget it at the recommended level. Historically it has been 5% to 7% less expensive to self-fund the program, but he will keep an eye on the cost. Mr. Haddad requested a comparison between the Mega MEHIP proposal and the discussed other plans. Mr. May will report back through the Town Manager.

8. Communication Advisory Committee

Mr. Nesbitt moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded, effective January 14, 2008, to refer to the Committee on Committees the proposal to establish a Communication Advisory Committee. The Committee of Committees shall review the merits and feasibility of the proposal and present a recommendation to the Town Council.

Mr. Nesbitt stated that he feels more communication is needed and this predominately citizen committee will coordinate, provide guidance and serve a monitoring function for communications in town. Mr. Haddad asked the Committee on Committees to review the provision that permits only non-elected officials to serve as members of the public. He noted that PZC members and Board of Education members might be helpful as committee members. The Committee on Committees was also asked to review how any committees have been created by ordinance and to examine the merits of an ad hoc committee being formed to address the issue. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Windham Region No Freeze Project

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded, effective January 14, 2008, to make an additional appropriation of \$1,000 to the Windham Region No Freeze Project, for the current fiscal year.

Ms. Duffy, a member of the No Freeze Project Board, commented that the program provides a place to stay for homeless people from all surrounding communities and that with the increased costs this year the program is low on funds. Ms. Duffy will let the Council know the number of Mansfield residents who have used the program recently. Council members noted that a program evaluation is done at budget time.

Motion passed with all in favor and Ms. Duffy abstaining.

9a. Discussion of a Financial Retreat

By consensus the Council agreed to meet on a Saturday morning in February to hold the annual financial retreat. Mr. Haddad asked that weekends with holidays be avoided.

VII. QUARTERLY REPORTS

- No comments

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Nesbitt stated that as he was reading the minutes of the various boards he notice that there were two issues the Council was requested to discuss. The Housing Board of Appeals requested oversight of procedures regarding the clarification of the role of alternates. The Downtown Partnership minutes refer to a possible separate agreement with the Town suggesting the Council should discuss any potential agreement prior to the Town representative going back to the board. (See Town Manager's Report)

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

- Mr. Paulhus noted that the Strategic Planning Open Houses were both well attended.

X. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Mr. Nesbitt questioned why there were more housing inspections in July and August with three inspectors than there were in September with four inspectors. He would like an

answer next meeting.

Ms. Koehn asked if a consultant's report analyzing the staffing requirements of the Building Department was ever done. The Town Manager will provide the report for the Housing Office, which was completed in 2005.

XI. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- Attached

- The Town Manager commented that a subcommittee of the Board of Directors, of which he is a member, is looking at the development agreement with the Downtown Partnership. If the Town were to be a party to any of these agreements they would be submitted to the Council for approval.

Discussion on the role of the Council in the development of plans and proposals ensued.

Mayor Paterson reported that Al Hawkins has recently resigned from the Downtown Partnership.

Mr. Clouette suggested the establishment of a holding tank for issues the Council would like to explore, a system for evaluating the effectiveness of programs and the creation of a volume of Town policy statements. The Town Manager commented that some of these are part of ongoing projects and suggested a legislative quarterly report to keep the Council aware of the progress of these items.

Mr. Nesbitt requested an update on the status of the audit report, the management letter and the official statement from bond counsel. Mr. Hart reported the audit report has been filed, but the management comments are not yet completed. A meeting with the auditors is being planned for the Finance Committee's meeting the first week in February.

Mr. Nesbitt requested an update on the development of the ordinances that are required as a result of the revisions in the Charter. The Town Clerk has presented a list to the Town Manager who is discussing it with staff and the Town Attorney.

Mr. Nesbitt requested a date for the completion of the Four Corners study. The Town Manager will provide the information.

XII. FUTURE AGENDAS

- Ms. Koehn would like all of The Chronicle articles, including editorials, which refer to Mansfield to be included in the Council's packet. The Town Manager will explore the cost of a service.

At a future meeting Mr. Nesbitt would like to discuss a policy for program evaluation and the community economic development framework including sewer, water and so on.

Mr. Haddad would like to discuss the membership of the Community Water and Wastewater Policy Advisory Committee.

The Town Clerk reported that the Freedom of Information Commission dismissed the request of the Council to review the issue of Council members from different parties discussing issues outside of a meeting and suggested the issue be referred to the Town Attorney. Mr. Nesbitt commented that at a meeting for new elected officials they were told that as long as there was not a quorum it would not be considered a meeting. The issue

has been referred to the Town Attorney who will issue an opinion.

XIII. PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

- - 10. M. Capriola : Bergin C.I. Community Notification System
 - 11. Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Windham Region re: Upcoming Events
 - 12. Chronicle, " Storrs Downtown Plan Now at \$220M"
 - 13. Eastern Highland Health District 2006-2007 Annual Report
 - 14. Eastern Highland Health District Pandemic Influenza Response Plan
 - 15. Eastern Highland Health District Proposed Fiscal Year 2008/2009 Budget
 - 16. Economic Review
 - 17. National League of Cities, " Performance Leadership: What's In Your Pocket?"
 - 18. Sun Edison re: Town of Mansfield PV Solar System Fact Sheet
 - 19. U.S. Department of Transportation – Roundabouts: An Information Guide

Mr. Paulhus moved and Ms. Duffy seconded to move into Executive Session.
Motion passed unanimously.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- - Personnel- Manager's Performance Review
 - Included – Matt Hart, Town Manager
 - Legal Issues
 - Included – Matt Hart, Town Manager, Dennis O'Brien, Town Attorney

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Clouette seconded to adjourn the meeting.
Motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk